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THE
Church of ENGLAND

Try'd by *Herself* : *K*

OR,

An Appeal to *Her own Principles* for
the Fitness and Expediency of a
Review and *Alteration* of her *Ar-*
ticles, Liturgy, &c.

Humbly address'd

To his GRACE the Archbishop of —

And to all whom it concerns.

By a real Friend to Truth and the Gospel.

Εγώ εις τὸ το γινώσκαι, καὶ οὐκ ἐκ τῆς ἀληθείας καὶ τοῦ νόμου, καὶ
μαρτυροῦμαι τῇ ἀληθείᾳ. Joan. xviii. 37.

— Etiam si nulli alii, nobis certe proderit: delectabi-
se conscientia, gaudebitque mens, in veritatis se luce
versari; quod est animæ pabulum, incredibili quadam
jucunditate perfusum. Verum non est desperandum.
Fortasse non canimus surdis. Nec enim tam in malo
statu res est, ut desint sanæ mentes, quibus & veritas
placeat, & monstratum sibi rectum iter & videant, &
sequantur. LACTANT, de JUSTIT. Cap. I.

L O N D O N :

Printed for J. Noon, at the White-Hart, Cheap-
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Church of England

1794 by 1795

A. O.

rights, language, etc.
Kantors and Associates of New York
the French and English of a
An Appeal to the French and English

Arabis stricta

To the Great the Archbishop of

... ..

By a real ... and the Gospel.



... ..

— *Etiam nunc illi, non cessant delectari*
in conscientia, quodlibet pariter, in veritate se hoc
verum, quod est aliud, se habent, incedit quibus
incedit quibus. Verum non est delectandum.
Foras non capere sibi. Hoc enim in malo
fatu res est, ut debet sine mentis, quibus de veritate
placet, de monitionem dei peragunt et videtur, de
delectant. Hec aut de veritate. Cap. 1.

NO. 10

Printed for J. Moon, at the White-Hart, Cheap.

Side, near the Foultry. MDCCLV.

My LORD,

THOUGH it is manifestly absurd, and a Contradiction, to suppose, that any Man is, or *can* be, bound to do *more* than he can; yet this, I think, is undeniably certain, that *every Man* is, and *must* be bound to do the *best* he can, whatever Relation, or Station he is in. By whatsoever Rule it is *wrong*, or *unfit*, to require the *former*; by the same Rule it is, and must be, *right* and *fit* to require the *latter*; because, in *Extremes*, the *Middle* must needs be *right*. Nor does it, I believe, need to be proved, that every *Character*, *Relation*, and *Station* in Life, brings with it Obligations *proper* and *peculiar* to itself — or, that there is, in *Obligations*, a Sort of *Scale*, or certain Degrees of *Precedency* and *Subordination* of *some* to *others* — or lastly, that our *first* and *highest* Obligations are to God, and consequently that we are bound to obey *him*, rather than *Men*: These are Points on all

B

Hands

Hands allowed. And it is from a thorough Sense of these *momentous Truths*, that I offer these Papers to *your Grace's* consideration. And indeed as they contain Matters of a very interesting nature, not only to *myself*, but also to many others of the *inferior Clergy*, to the *Church* we belong to, and even to *Christianity itself*; to whom could I so properly address them, as to *One*, who is not only at the *Head* of the Church, but as much distinguished by his *Wisdom, Moderation, and Love of Truth*, as by the *eminent Station*, he possesses in it. Encouraged therefore by those *amiable Qualities* (which from the Report of all Men, make up *your Grace's Character*) to hope, that the *Importance of the Matter* (if it will not *justify*) may at least *extenuate* the Presumption of this Address; I will, without any further *Preface* or *Apology*, proceed in my Design; which, I am sure, is *honest*, however *meanly* executed,

Your Grace then will please to observe, (what hath been already hinted) that I am not only a *Minister of the Gospel*, but a *Clergyman of the established Church*. My *In-*

clination, as well as *Profession*, hath led me to be a good deal conversant with the *Holy Scriptures*: And, as *Light* is not more natural or agreeable to the Eye, than *Truth* is to the Understanding; from hence I have fallen into *some Sentiments*, which are not, perhaps, exactly in the *common Road*. From hence, I say, for if I know any Thing of my own Heart, I think I can safely affirm, that a *Fondness* for *Novelty*, merely as such, is no Part of my Character. A *Lover and Seeker of Truth*, I readily own myself to be, but *that*, I hope, is no *new Character*. It is evident, there were *some such*, even in the dark and dangerous Times of Popery: And that in this *happy Age of Light and Liberty*, there are *many more*, I cannot suppose your *Grace* to be ignorant. For, even in the narrow Compass of my *Acquaintance*, I will venture to say, there are *several*, as well among the *Clergy* as the *Laity*, who are far from thinking the *native Beauty and Simplicity of the Gospel* to be yet sufficiently cleared and restored; or, the *established Form of our religious Worship* (how preferable soever to all others) to be *so compleat*, as not to

admit of *some further Improvement* ; and who therefore would be glad to see that *excellent Plan* laid down and begun by our *Reformers*, carried on, as far as may be, towards *that Perfection*, of which it is capable.

The Reformation, as far as it went, (and it went perhaps as far, as at *that Time* could well be expected) was indeed a *glorious Work*; and the *Liturgy*, the *Articles*, and the *Homilies* set forth by the Order of that *hopeful young Prince*, Edward the Sixth, may doubtless be acknowledged to have been very *useful*, and even *necessary for those Times* : But Nobody, I presume, will pretend to say, they were *so finished*, as that *no Alteration* could ever be made in them for the better. For we know the *two first* were, pretty early in Queen *Elizabeth's Reign*, new modell'd by the Bishops and Clergy, and then enjoined by Authority of Parliament. But even *this* was not thought to have done the Business : For, tho' in the Reign immediately succeeding, little more was produc'd, than a very indifferent *new Translation* of the *Bible* ; yet afterwards, in the Reign of *Charles the Second*,

cond, even in that *gay and dissolute Reign*, a *Design*, or something *like a Design*, was form'd, and enter'd into, of *reviewing the Liturgy* : But the Time was not yet come : The *Spleen*, the *Choler*, the *Rage*, which had taken place some Years before, was not yet enough abated ; and so, little, or nothing, was done to *the Purpose*, and *some Things*, perhaps, which might as well have been left alone.

And O ! that the next Attempt had been more successful ; *that*, I mean, which was made soon after the *Revolution of glorious Memory* — A Time, 'one would have thought, the most favourable to such an Undertaking ; when the former Obstacles were, in appearance, removed ; and the whole Nation seem'd to be inspired with *one and the same Spirit of Liberty*, and consequently to be in the fittest Disposition for countenancing and bringing such a Work to good Effect. But, notwithstanding Circumstances seem'd so promising, *this Opportunity* was likewise lost ; by what Means — the World hath been already informed.

But,

But, though *Little* hath hitherto been done, yet from this Account it is easy to observe, that *Something* of this sort hath long been judged *necessary*, and *wish'd for* ——— that from time to time, there have been *Some* both of the *Clergy* and *Laity*, who, though they were truly thankful for what was done at the *Reformation*, yet have thought it was very imperfect, and might still receive some Improvement ——— and that as the *Reformers* like *Wise* and *Good Men*, made such *Alterations* and *Amendments*, as *they* judged Right, or the *Times* would bear, but were never thought *Infallible*; so consequently, what they did, is rather to be understood as a *Good Precedent*, than to bind After-ages from imitating their Example, *i. e.* from aiming at such Improvements in the *Publick Worship of God*, as, in their own Consciences, they are convinced, are most agreeable to *his Will*, and most conducive to *his Glory*, and the *true Edification of his Church*.

Now

Now, if this be truly the case ——— if, notwithstanding what *hath been done*, it hath been made to appear, and is owned and confessed by *every moderate, unprejudiced Person*, that there is *still more* wanting to be done ——— What a *Pity*, or rather, what a *Shame*, is it, that *we*, who have *such a Pattern* before us, so good a *Foundation* laid (and at so much Hazard too) by our Forefathers, and enjoy the Advantages of *Knowledge, Learning* and *favourable Times*, so much *beyond* them, should yet come so far *short* of them in our *Zeal* and *Endeavours* for the Honour and Improvement of our Church and Worship?

There is, I think, *my Lord*, something in the Mind of Man, which, if not wilfully checked, or otherwise hindered, would constantly lead him to desire, and pursue, *Perfection*. In the *Arts* and *Sciences*, we are daily refining and improving: In *Matters of State*, we seldom fail, at least to *wish*, that what we think amiss, may be amended; and every *prudent Man*, doubtless, endeavours

vours the same in his *private Affairs*. And, why should we be *more indolent and indifferent* in Things pertaining to *Religion*, and the Worship of the *greatest* and most *perfect Being*? *We* of the Clergy in particular, by our very Profession are *Seekers* and *Teachers of Truth*. At our taking upon us the Order of Priesthood, *your Grace* knows very well, what a *solemn Declaration* the Church requires of us, that “ The holy
 “ Scriptures contain sufficiently all Doctrine
 “ required of Necessity for eternal Salva-
 “ tion through Faith in Jesus Christ.” And, in Consequence of this, what a solemn Promise we make, “ that we will teach no-
 “ thing, as required of Necessity to eternal
 “ Salvation, but that which we are per-
 “ suaded may be concluded and proved by
 “ the Scripture:” And not only so, but also, that “ we will be ready with all faithful
 “ Diligence, to banish and drive away all er-
 “ roneous and strange Doctrines, contrary
 “ to God’s Word.” To the same purpose, our VIth Article obliges us to confess, that
 “ Holy Scripture containeth all things ne-
 “ cessary to Salvation : So that whatsoever
 is

" is not read therein, nor may be proved
 " thereby, is not to be required of any
 " Man, that it should be believed as an
 " Article of Faith, or be thought requi-
 " site or necessary to Salvation." In like
 manner, the XXth Article, though it as-
 serts the Authority of the Church, yet
 expressly teaches, that " it is not lawful
 " for the Church to ordain any thing, that
 " is contrary to God's Word written; nei-
 " ther may it so expound one Place of Scrip-
 " ture, that it be repugnant to another,
 " Wherefore, though the Church be a Wit-
 " ness and Keeper of holy Writ, yet, as
 " it ought not to decree any thing *against*
 " the same, so *besides* the same ought it not
 " to enforce any thing to be believed for
 " necessity of Salvation." And, as to the
 Authority of *General Councils*, the next Ar-
 ticle very justly declares, that " Forasmuch
 " as they be an Assembly of Men (whereof
 " all be not governed with the Spirit and
 " Word of God) they may err, and some-
 " times have erred, even in Things per-
 " taining to God: Wherefore Things or-
 " dained

" dained by them, as necessary to Salva-
 " tion, have neither Strength nor Autho-
 " rity, unless it may be declared, that they
 " be taken out of Holy Scripture". These,
 my Lord, are the *express Positions* and *esta-*
blished Tenets of our Church; owned and
 assented to by us, in a most solemn Man-
 ner, at our Entrance into Priest's Orders,
 and on other Occasions: And, when brought
 and compared together, how plainly do they
 teach us the great Obligation, *we* of the
Clergy are under, first to study and seek
 after the *Truth of God's Word*; and then,
 to *oppose* and *banish* every Doctrine, that
we are persuaded, is erroneous and contrary
thereto?

And very suitably hereunto, both *we* and
 our *Congregations*, are taught and enjoined
 to pray, " that it would please God to il-
 " luminate all Bishops, Priests, and Deacons,
 " with true Knowledge and Understanding
 " of his Word ——— that he would de-
 " liver us from all false Doctrine ———
 " that he would rule and govern his Holy
 " Church Universal in the right Way——
 " that

“ that he would bring into the Way of
 “ Truth, all such as have erred and are
 “ deceived ” — And, that all who pro-
 “ fess and call themselves Christians, may
 “ be led into the Way of Truth ” —

From which Passages, and others that might
 be mentioned, I cannot but think it evi-
 dent, that it is a *fundamental Principle* of
 our Church, that her Members, especially
 her Clergy, *ought*, not only to examine her
 Tenets, but also to offer to the Publick,
 whatever they shall, upon such Examination,
 find conducive to her Improvement, whe-
 ther in *Doctrine*, in *Discipline*, or *Worship* ;
 and to endeavour, that she may approach,
 as near as possible, to that *Truth* and *Recti-
 tude*, for which we are taught so frequent-
 ly to pray. For, seeing it is an undoubted
 Truth, that God designed, and expects, us
 to be his *Agents*, and *Instruments* of his
 Providence, as far as the Abilities, he hath
 given us, will reach ; and consequently, that
 it is necessarily implied in the *Notion* of
 Prayer, that our *Endeavours* should always
 accompany, or second our *Petitions* : how
 absurd, what Mockery, must it be, Day
 after

after Day, to offer up these Petitions to that *most wise and tremendous Being*, if we do not, *besides*, contribute what we *reasonably* can, toward the Accomplishment thereof, *i. e.* if we either neglect to seek and discover the *right Way*; or, if after having discover'd it, we do not *set it forth, and shew it accordingly*? It is this very *Principle and Practice*, to which our Church owes even her *present Degree of Truth and Perfection*, and upon which *the Reformation itself* stands: And I am inclined to hope, she will never act so inconsistent a Part, as to deny the *Rectitude* of that Principle in her *Members*, upon which *she herself* proceeded, and on *which alone* she is *now* able to maintain her Ground.

It is not, *my Lord*, my *Intention* to give any Offence, but only, with an *honest Freedom and Plainness* to speak the *Truth*; which, with all *reasonable Men*, is, and ought to be, before every other Consideration. Seeing then it is evident from the foregoing Quotations, what are the *Principles and Tenets* of our Church, *viz.* that every Clergyman ought to study the holy Scriptures, and hath a *Right* to judge for himself, what is the
true

true Sense of them ——— to banish all erroneous and strange Doctrines, contrary to God's Word ——— and to teach nothing, as necessary to Salvation, but what, he is persuaded, is agreeable thereto ——— I hope I shall not be thought to give any *just Offence* by the well meant Liberty I am going to take, of enquiring into the *Meaning* and *Obligation* of that *Subscription* required in our Church, and is *Consistency* with the forementioned Principles and Tenets.

By the 36th Canon, it is well known, every Clergyman, before he can be admitted to any *Ecclesiastical Living*, &c. is obliged to subscribe three Articles. The 1st. Concerning the *King's Supremacy*: The 2d. Concerning *the Lawfulness of using the Book of Common Prayer*, &c. The 3d concerning *the Book of Articles of Religion*. My Business is only with the two Last: And the *Meaning* of our Subscription to them is plainly this ——— to "acknowledge" under our Hands, that "The Book of Common Prayer containeth in it Nothing contrary to the Word of God:" And, that "all and every the Articles, in Number
" Thirty-

“Thirty-nine, are agreeable to the Word of “God.” But here we may observe, there is some little Difference in the Expressions: Of the *Book of Common Prayer*, it is only said, that “it containeth in it nothing *contrary* to — Of the *Articles*, “that they are agreeable to — the Word of God.” Which Difference, I suppose, was made in Consideration of the *Preface, Calendar, Rubrics*, and other *Directions*, in the *Book of Common Prayer*; and was not owing to any *supposed Difference* in the *Doctrines* contained in it: Of *which*, I presume, as well as of the *Articles* (seeing they tally so exactly together) it is to be understood, that they are agreeable to the *Word of God*, i. e. either *expressly* delivered in the Holy Scriptures, or *fairly* and *truly* deduc'd and concluded from them.

Now, if *this* be the *Meaning* of our Subscription, as, to me, it plainly appears to be: And, if the forementioned *Principles* and *Tenets* are *truly* the *Principles* and *Tenets* of our Church; as, from the several Passages quoted, I think, cannot be denied: I hope,
I may

I may be permitted to ask — What shall any Clergyman do, if, after an honest and sincere Enquiry, he shall happen to be persuaded, that any Doctrine, established in our *Articles*, *Homilies*, *Liturgy*, or other *Offices*, is not truly grounded on Scripture, but on Scripture ill understood, and wrongly applied? Must he preach and maintain such a Doctrine? I apprehend not; because, in so doing, he will act both against his *Persuasion*, and his solemn *Promise* at his Ordination. Shall he then preach, or write against it, *i. e.* set forth its *Repugnancy* to, or *Want of Foundation* in, the Scriptures? No, that he must not do neither, lest he should be judg'd guilty of *impugning* his Subscription, and consequently incur the *Censures* of the Church. Shall he then, lastly, be quite silent, and neither preach, nor write about it at all? How will that be consistent with his other solemn *Promise*, made likewise at his Ordination, to “ be ready with all faithful Diligence to banish and drive away all erroneous and strange Doctrines, *i. e.* all Doctrines which, he is persuaded, are contrary to God's Word?” So that he must necessarily

cessarily offend, either against *the Church*, or against *Truth* and his own *Conscience*; And what a *sad Dilemma* must a Man be under, when he can neither *speak*, what he thinks *Truth*, with *Safety*, nor be *silent* without *Offence*? Suppose, for Instance, that any Clergyman, after the most mature and diligent Examination of Scripture, cannot *persuade* himself, that the *Doctrine of the Trinity*, as laid down in the Creed commonly ascribed to *Athanasius* (tho' some hundreds of Years later than him) and in some other Parts of the *Liturgy*, is a *Doctrine agreeable to God's Word* *; because he finds not only

St.
 * Bishop *Sherlock*, speaking upon the Subject of Mysteries, and endeavouring to clear Christianity of the Objections which *Deistical Persons* may bring against it, on account of the Doctrine of the Trinity, says, Vol. I, Page 137. of his Discourses — “ God hath declared
 “ to us, that he has an only begotten Son, and that
 “ he was the Person who came down from Heaven for
 “ our Deliverance: — that he has an Holy Spirit, who
 “ shall sanctify our Hearts, and be assisting to us in
 “ working out our Salvation. This, and agreeable to
 “ this, is the Scripture Doctrine: And a Man would
 “ be put to it to fix any Absurdity, or so much as
 “ seeming Contradiction upon this Doctrine, or any
 “ thing said concerning it in Scripture.” Now tho' I
 can

St. Paul declaring, 1 Cor. viii. 6. That to us
 (Christians) *there is but one God, the Father,*
of whom (as the Fountain) are all Things —
And one Lord Jesus Christ, by & by, or thro'
whom (as the Mean or Agent) are all Things;
 — but also, *the Son himself expressly confessing,*
John v. 19. that He can do nothing of Himself,

can readily join with his Lordship in this, and am highly
 pleased with his *lively Manner* of displaying the Ex-
 cellency and Reasonableness of Christianity; yet, I fear,
 he will have but little Success with the Deists among us;
 whilst they apprehend the *establish'd Doctrine of the*
Church (whereof his Lordship is not only a *Member,*
 but a *Bishop*) to be, in appearance, so different upon
 this Head from *that*, which, he tells them is the *Scripture*
Doctrine. For, may they not reasonably expect,
 that a Church, which claims to be built upon *Scripture*,
 should teach *nothing*, but the *Doctrine of Scripture*?
 And will they not therefore, from this Difference, con-
 clude, either that his Lordship's Account must *fall short*
of, or that the *Doctrine of the Church* must *extend* the
Scripture Doctrine upon this Article? His Lordship
 therefore, I hope, will consider, how much it behoves
 him (if he would do any *real Service* to Christianity)
 to contribute his Assistance (consistently with his Dis-
 course) to reduce the *Church Doctrine* to the Standard
 of Scripture; and so to remove those Objections against
 the *Christian Revelation*, which arise, not from the *Re-*
velation itself, but from the *authoritative Interpretations,*
 and *dogmatical Conclusions* of weak and fallible Men.

D

and

and again, *John* xiv. 8. that *his Father is greater than he*.—Or, suppose, he cannot persuade himself, that to *supplicate and pray to the Holy Spirit* is agreeable to God's Word; because he thinks, he does not find therein, either any *Precept* for it, or any *Instance* of such a Practice; which, he may reasonably presume (had it been necessary to Salvation) would not have been wanting, or a Point of such Importance have been left to be made out from obscure and doubtful Expressions, by far-fetch'd Deductions and Conclusions—Or, lastly, suppose, that tho' he may believe this Doctrine *himself*, yet he cannot pronounce *certain Damnation* against an honest conscientious Christian, for *not believing* it; because he thinks, that to *do so* is contrary to that *Charity*, which *above all Things* is requir'd in Scripture of Christians towards one another, as necessary to Salvation—Supposing, I say, *all*, or *any*, of these Cases to happen, what must *the poor Man* do? Before he can be admitted to *most* Preferments, he is, by the 36th Canon required to subscribe, not only to the 39 Articles, i. e. to acknowledge them under his Hand to be *all* and *every* of them

them agreeable to God's Word, but also, to
 the Book of Common Prayer, &c. so far, as
 to acknowledge, that it containeth in it
 nothing contrary to the Word of God. Nor
 is this all: For, after his Admission, in
 case it be a *Benefice with Cure*, by 13 Eliz.
 c. 12. he is obliged, publickly to read the
 39 Articles in his Church, in Time of
 Common Prayer, within two Months af-
 ter his Induction; and after reading them,
 to make Declaration of his *unfeigned As-*
sent to them on Pain of Deprivation:
 And by 14 Charles II. commonly called
the Act of Uniformity, he is likewise bound,
 under the same Penalty, "upon some Lord's
 Day" within a limited Time, "to read Morn-
 " ing and Evening Prayer, and after such
 " reading thereof, openly and publickly, be-
 " fore the Congregation there assembled,
 " to declare his unfeigned Assent and Con-
 " sent (*in the Body of the Act, it is*) " to
 " the Use of All, (but in the *Form of*
 " *Declaration*, there set down, it is,) to
 " all and every Thing contained and pre-
 " scribed in; and by the Book, entituled,
 D 2 &c.

" &c"*. And, how can he do *all this*, whilst he is *persuaded*, there is any thing in *these Books*,

* I know, it is said, and very justly too, that the Act, 14 Charles II. ought not to be understood to require us to give our *Unfeigned Assent* and *Consent* to more than to the *Use* of the Book of Common Prayer, though the Word, *Use*, is left out in the *Form of Declaration*; because, that which is *more plain* and *explicit*, ought to interpret that which is *left so*; and that this hath been thought a sufficient Answer to the Difficulties and Objections raised, in this respect, against *Ministerial Conformity*. But, must it not be considered likewise, that the *Fitness* of assenting even to the *Use* of a Liturgy, must depend on the Nature of the Doctrines contained in it? For though I am not so strait-lac'd, as to think, that a Man may not, very innocently, give his Assent to the *Use* of a Liturgy, though he cannot *entirely* approve of *every Expression*, or even *Proposition* in it, (because, in *human Compositions*, Perfection is not to be expected) yet, surely, the Case is very different, if he finds in it *any Doctrine* laid down, as *Fundamental*, and *any Practice*, grafted upon it, which he thinks cannot be assented to, or us'd, consistently with the Word and Attributes of God: Which plainly shews, that an unfeigned Assent and Consent to the *Use* of a Liturgy, must, in the Nature of the Thing, imply likewise an unfeigned Assent and Consent to the *main* and *principal Doctrines* in it; and that they cannot be distinguished from each other. And therefore, I cannot but wonder, that the Author
of

Books, contrary to God's Word? Is it to be supposed, that this *Subscription* and *Declaration* are allow'd and understood by the Church itself, to extend only to *such Things*, as, *be himself* is persuaded, are agreeable to God's Word? From the Nature of *Protestantism* in general, and from the *particular Tenets* before mentioned, one would be led to think so; (for, surely, the Church is consistent with *herself*; her *Practice* uniform, and of a Piece, with her *Principles*.) But then, unless she hath any where *expressly* made such Allowance, would not a Man be guilty of *mental Reservation*, in subscribing and declaring Assent in such a Manner? When therefore, in *one Place*, she requires a Clergyman to promise, that he will teach nothing, as necessary to Salvation, but what *he is persuaded* may be proved from Scripture; and in *another Place*, obliges him to profess publicly and openly in the Church, and

of *The Essay on Spirit* (the Design of which Performance I am far from blaming) though he seems much to disapprove, at least, of *one great Doctrine* of our Liturgy, yet declares himself *pretty easy* upon the Head of giving unfeigned Assent and Consent to the Use of it. Dedication, Pag. 12.

and consequently to *teach*, that unless a Man believes, *such and such a Doctrine*, without Doubt he shall perish everlastingly, when perhaps he is not persuaded, that it may be prov'd from Scripture — how is the *poor Man* to extricate himself; or, how are these Things to be reconciled? How, I say, shall we reconcile *this Practice* of the Church, with those *just and rational Petitions* before-mentioned — with those *truly Protestant Tenets* in the viith, xxth, and xxist Articles — and with those *solemn Promises*, which are requir'd of, and made by, *every Priest* at his Ordination, and I will add, by *every Bishop* too, at his Consecration? I am not willing to think, that when *our Church* threw off the *Power and Infallibility of Rome*, she did it with a View to claim them *Herself*, or, that She intended to mock her Clergy with a *Shadow*, instead of securing to them that *real Liberty*, which, by *Reason*, and the *Gospel*, and her *own Principles*, they have an *indisputable Right* to: And yet, if they must be oblig'd, *absolutely*, and without any *Limitation* and *Exception*, to submit and yield Assent to *all* her

her Interpretations and Conclusions, does She not seem to have run into that Absurdity? For, to acknowledge, that *an Assembly of Men may err*, and yet to require an *unlimited Assent* to all their Doctrines and Decrees, what is it, but to make Herself *Fallible* and *Infallible* at the same time? *An Inconsistency*, which the *Church of Rome* is not guilty of.

And, on this Occasion, it may further be observed, that the *Mind of Man* seems to be so fram'd and constituted, as not to be *able*, always, to believe either as our *Superiors* may require, or as *we ourselves* may desire. For, if *Faith* be an *Assent of the Mind to something upon Evidence*, it is plain, that *Faith* is not purely a Matter of *Choice*, but *Something*, wherein the *Mind* is rather *passive*, and which depends on the *Nature and Degree of the Evidence*, and every Man's *Perception* of it. A Man indeed may *choose* or *refuse*, to attend to the *Evidence*, (which *last* seems to denote, what the Author of the *Hebrews*, Chap. iii. 12. calls an *evil Heart of Unbelief*, i. e. a Heart under the influence of evil Appetites and Affec-

Affections, which hinder him from considering and seeing the Truth) but if he *doth attend* to it, he *cannot choose*, or *refuse*, to believe, just as he hath a Mind; but must do the *one* or the *other*, according as the Evidence appears to him sufficient, or not*. And there-

* Since the writing of this, I have met with a Passage in Dr. Taylor's *Liberty of Prophecy*; so pat to my Purpose, and so expressive of my Sense, that I cannot forbear giving it to your Grace, by way of Note, though somewhat long. It is in his XIII. Sect. Numb. 13, where, after several Arguments to shew the *Injustice* and *Unreasonableness* of Force in *Matters of Faith*, he hath these Words. ——— “ And if yet in the
 “ Nature of the Thing it were neither unjust, nor
 “ unreasonable, yet there is nothing, under God
 “ Almighty, that hath Power over the Soul of Man,
 “ so as to command a Persuasion, or to judge a Dis-
 “ agreeing: Human positive Laws direct all external
 “ Acts in order to several Ends, and the Judges take
 “ Cognizance accordingly; but no Man can command
 “ the Will, or punish him, that obeys the Law a-
 “ gainst his Will: for, because it's End is serv'd in
 “ external Obedience, it neither looks after more,
 “ neither can it be serv'd by more, nor take notice of
 “ any more. And yet possibly the Understanding is
 “ less subject to human Power, than the Will; for
 “ that human Power hath a Command over external
 “ Acts, which naturally and regularly flow from the
 “ Will

therefore, *my Lord*, may we not conclude,
that *The Church*, in imposing this Subscription
and

“ Will, & ut plurimum suppose a direct Act of Will,
“ but always either a direct, or indirect Volition, pri-
“ mary or accidental: but the Understanding is a na-
“ tural Faculty, subject to no command, but where
“ the Command is itself a Reason fit to satisfy and
“ persuade it. And therefore God’s commanding us
“ to believe such Revelations, persuades and satisfies
“ the Understanding by his commanding and reveal-
“ ing. For there is no greater probation in the World,
“ that a Proposition is true, than because God hath
“ commanded us to believe it. But because no Man’s
“ Command is a Satisfaction to the Understanding,
“ or a Verification of the Proposition, therefore the
“ Understanding is not subject to human Authority.
“ They may persuade, but not enjoin, where God
“ hath not. And where God hath, if it appear so
“ to him, he is an Infidel, if he doth not believe
“ it. And if all Men have no other Efficacy or
“ Authority on the Understanding, but by Persuasion,
“ Proposal, and Entreaty, then a Man is bound to
“ assent but according to the Operation of the Ar-
“ gument, and the Energy of Persuasion; neither in-
“ deed can he, though he would never so fain; and
“ he that out of Fear, and too much Compliance
“ and Desire to be safe, shall desire to bring his Un-
“ derstanding with some Luxation to the Belief of hu-
“ man Dictates and Authorities, may as often miss of the
“ Truth, as hit it; but is sure always to lose the Com-
“ fort of Truth, because he believes it upon indirect

and Declaration of unfeigned Assent, *absolutely* and *without any Limitation*, seems to deal very *hardly* not only with her *Clergy*, but with *human Nature itself*, as well as *inconsistently* with the *Wisdom* and *Equity* of those Principles and Tenets, which I have before shewed, are the *very Basis and Foundation*, upon which she stands.

I am well aware, how ready *some* may be to reply here, that *This* cannot be deem'd a Matter of *Hardship*, or *Complaint*: Because, if a Clergyman cannot comply with the *Terms prescribed*, he is at Liberty to *refuse* them; nay, and *ought* to do so; and even to *give up* any Preferment, he may be already possessed of, rather than do Violence to his Conscience by continuing to hold it, upon Terms, which he thinks *unscriptural* and *unreasonable*.

This is indeed a *short* Way of answering the Difficulty: whether it be a *reasonable* one,

“insufficient, and incompetent Arguments: And, as.
 “his Desire it should be *so*, is his best Argument.
 “that it is *so*; *so*, the pleasing of Men is his best.
 “Reward, and his not being condemned and con-
 “tradicted, all the Possession of a Truth.”

one, will soon appear. For which is best, i. e. most reasonable, and most desireable, that *Things* should be put into *such a State and Method*, as *all* may *safely* comply with ~~———~~ or, into *such a State and Method*, as will exclude the *most valuable*, i. e. the most conscientious Men, and *them only*, from the Ministry; and perhaps reduce *some* that are already in it, to the hard Necessity of starving with their Families? For *your Grace* will please to consider here, that of those, who are intended for *holy Orders*, Few are born to any *temporal Estate*, or to any *greater Fortune*, than perhaps is just sufficient for their Education ~~———~~ that therefore they generally get into Orders *as soon* as they can, and *before* they have, or can be *supposed* to have, well weighed and compar'd with holy Scripture, the *Tenets* and *Doctrines* they are required and obliged to subscribe and give their Assent to ~~——~~ that, *afterwards*, if they are so happy as to meet with a *Friend and Patron*, yet *Few* of them arrive to more than a *Competency*, and *Some*, hardly to *That* ~~———~~ that they generally marry, and have Families, sometimes pretty

large ones, whom, by all the Laws of God and Man, they are bound to maintain ———
 Lastly, that having dedicated *themselves*, the *Best* of their Days, and the *little Fortune* they had, to *this Profession*, they are not *allow'd* *, nor indeed *capable* or qualified, to exercise and manage any worldly Trade or Employment: If therefore after *Twenty* or *Thirty* Years honest Application in their Profession, any of them should be *persuaded*, that *some Doctrines*, held by our Church, and to which they have *formerly* subscribed, are either *contrary to*, or cannot be *proved from*, Holy Scripture, what Method is to be taken under these hard Circumstances? Shall they quit their *Preferments*, or continue to hold them for the Sake of themselves and Families? † Every
 One

* *Rapin* tells us, that by a *Canon*, made in the Reign of *King Edgar*, it was ordered, “ that *Priests* “ should learn some Trade, that they might be able “ to get a Livelyhood, in case of Necessity.” And, how happy would it be for *some Clergymen*, if some such *Canon*, or *Law*, were in force Now-a-days?

† The Right Rev. Author of the *Preface* to Dr. Samuel Clarke's *Posthumous Sermons*, giving some Account,
 How

one is not a *Wb—st—n*, and able to read *Lectures* in Philosophy. And, if they do

re-
 “ How it came to pass, that this great Man was
 “ never rais’d higher in the Church;” tells us p. 48,
 49, Edit. 8vo. “ It was neither for Want of Merit,
 “ nor Interest, nor the Favour of some, in whose Pow-
 “ er it was to have rais’d him. But he had Reasons, with-
 “ in his own Breast, which hinder’d him either from seek-
 “ ing after, or accepting any such Promotion—He was
 “ happy (saith his Lordship) in that Station, in which it
 “ had pleased God to fix him, before those Reasons took
 “ Place.” And, what *those Reasons* were, his *Lord-*
ship gives us sufficient Room to guess, Page 27—where,
 speaking of *Wigstan’s Hospital* at *Leicester*, whereof
 Dr. *Clarke* had been *Master*, he says, “ It was a Place
 “ of no very great Profit, but made agreeable to him—
 “ by the Method of taking Possession of it, free from
 “ some of those Circumstances, which by Law attend
 “ upon most other Preferments.”

○ It seems then from this account, as if Dr. *Clarke*
 had some Scruple about *subscribing*, which he could
 not get over; and was therefore so honest as not to
 subscribe any more: But he still kept the Living he had;
 nor does his Lordship blame him for it. And can we
 suppose, that so great and good a Man, as Dr. *Clarke*,
 wou’d have given such an *Example*, if he had not
 thought the Practice justifiable; or, that so great and
 good a Man, as his Lordship, wou’d have recorded it
 without some Note of Disapprobation, if he had thought,
 it deserved any?

resign them, are they *sure*, after all; they shall not be censur'd as *Revolters*? These, *my Lord*, are Considerations which seem to render the Case of *such Clergymen* truly pitiable, especially as they have not the Remedy in their own Power. And what *reasonable Man* can help thinking, that if there be any Blame in this Part of their Conduct, a great Share of it must, and will, in the End, rest upon those, who, after such *reasonable Application*, as of late Years hath been made to them, still refuse, or neglect to contribute their Assistance, towards removing the Grievances complain'd of. For my own part, *my Lord*, I freely own, that I am *One of Those unhappy Mortals* who cannot submit their Reason and Understanding to the mere *Ipse Dixit* of any *Man*, or *Church*, upon Earth. I was indeed brought up to the *Ministry*, with a very good *Liking* to it; and I enter'd into it with a *truly sincere Design and Desire* of being as *useful* in it as I could. But at the same Time I must acknowledge, that, my *Education* being *all my Fortune*, I subscrib'd, and did *every Thing*, the Church requir'd (as many other young Men in my
Cir-

Circumstances, I suppose, do) *before* I was sufficiently acquainted with the *Doctrines* subscrib'd to, their *Foundation* in Scripture, and the *Controversies*, which, I have since found, have been rais'd, and carried on, about them in the Christian World. And here, *my Lord*, is one of those Things, which, I think, may be reckon'd justly blameable among us, viz. that *raw*, young Candidates for Orders (nay, even Boys, going from School to the University *) are oblig'd to acknowledge

* As it may not be known by *every one*, into whose Hands these Papers may chance to fall, it must here be observ'd, that every Youth admitted into the University of Oxford, if he be above twelve Years of Age, is requir'd, and (one wou'd imagine) suppos'd to be sufficiently qualified, to subscribe to all those *abstruse Points* in the 39 Articles; and yet, *not to be qualified* to take the Oaths to the Government, till he is sixteen. And is it not surprising, that neither that learned and venerable Body itself, nor any of those great Men, who from thence have become Ornaments in Church and State, have ever, that I could hear of, thought it worth their while, to consider this Matter, and to apply to proper Authority for an Amendment of the Statute, which enjoins this absurd Practice; which can serve no other End, but to make a mere *Joke and Farce* of Subscription; to teach the Youth to consider it only as a *Matter*

and subscribe to those obscure and profound Doctrines of the *Trinity*, *Original Sin*, *Predestination*, *Grace*, &c. (which have puzzled the *Learned* for *so many Ages*, and fill'd the World with *so many Volumes*; and) of which perhaps they understand no more, than of the *Coran of Mabomet*, or the *Doctrines of Confucius*. A Method this, in my humble Opinion, little to the Honour of a *Church and Nation*, which calls and professeth itself *Protestant*: Because, as it manifestly obligeth us to *set out* with an *implicit Subscription*; so it visibly tends to *continue* us in it ever afterwards; there being *many*, I doubt, who, having once set their Hands to what they did not understand, may think it best *not to endeavour* to understand it, but to take Things for granted; lest it should disturb their Repose, or endanger their *Orthodoxy and Advancement*, to examine, what, at first, they thus blindly subscrib'd to, out of mere Necessity. And therefore, *my Lord*, (with all Deference I speak it) wou'd it not be

of Form without any *Meaning*, and to prepare them for a *blind Submission* to whatever shall be impos'd upon them.

be better, *i. e.* more for the Honour of our Church, and of Religion in general, either that *no Subscription at all* was requir'd of our young Candidates for Orders; or, if there *must* be any, that it was only to some such *plain Proposition*, as *this*, viz. that *the holy Scriptures are the Word of God, and contain every Thing necessary to Salvation?* This wou'd be considering them *properly*, and as they *really* are, *i. e.* as *Tiro's* only, and *Beginners*, and not as *Rabbi's*, and *deep learned Divines*; which they can no more be expected to be, than a *young Student of the Temple* to be *immediately* capable of deciding the most knotty Points of the Law.

But indeed, in a *Protestant Church and Nation*, why should not such a Subscription, as *this*, be sufficient for the *Clergy in general*; seeing it *virtually* comprehends an Obligation to acknowledge the Doctrines even of the *present Articles*, as far as any one is *persuaded*, they are founded on Scripture, which these *Articles themselves* exhibit, as the *only Criterion or Touchstone of Truth?* A Clergyman, I say, by being requir'd to subscribe to

this *single Article only*, wou'd not be oblig'd to *disown* or *deny* any of the *old ones*, if he thought them true: He might still enjoy the *old System* of Faith, only with this Difference, that he wou'd not have it in his Power to *molest* and *make Hereticks* of those, who cou'd not believe exactly as he did.

If here it shou'd be said (as possibly it may, by somebody or other) that unless the *Clergy* are tied down to some *certain and express Standard of Faith and Doctrine*, they will be liable to run into a Variety of *strange* and *extravagant Notions*, and to fill the World with abundance of *idle*, if not *hurtful*, Disputes. — My Answer is, 1st. We have long experienc'd, how vain it is to set up *any Standard of Faith*, but the *Scriptures*, and how ineffectual all our *Bars* and *Fences* have been, to prevent *Diversity of Opinions*, and *Disputes* in the World. And indeed, why shou'd they be prevented? Is not, to *differ in Opinion*, the unalienable Right of human Nature; and a *free Debate* and *Enquiry*, the only rational Way of coming at the Truth? If *these* are denied us,
and

and we must needs swallow, what is put into our Mouths, what Matter is it, what becomes of our *Bibles*, or whether we are born with *Understandings* or no? — 2dly. The *Holy Scriptures* either are a *certain and express Standard of Faith and Doctrine*, or they are not: If they are, as our *Articles themselves* abundantly declare, what need of any other? — 3dly. The *Holy Scriptures*, in all *necessary Points of Faith and Doctrine*, are *plain and intelligible*, or they are not: If they are, as we affirm against the *Papists*, why should not *they alone* be deem'd sufficient? And, if they are *not*, who hath such Authority to interpret them, that all others shall be bound *absolutely* to submit to their Interpretation? The *xxth Article* indeed saith, "The Church hath — Authority in Controversies of Faith." But *Who*, or *What*, is the Church? For I do not find by the preceding Article (which professedly describes a *visible Church*) that it signifies either the *Convocation*, or even the *whole Clergy, alone*; but, rather, the *whole Number of Faithful*, i. e. believing Men, Laity as well as Clergy, in any Society—But, 4thly, let us suppose the

Church here spoken of, to mean particularly the Bishops and Clergy in Convocation, what is their Authority in Controversies of Faith? Is it, to judge concerning any Point in Dispute, and to deliver each for himself only, his own Judgment? Or, is it an Authority to settle and determine by a Majority of Votes, what shall be Truth, i. e. the Standard of Faith and Doctrine, to all others? Now, supposing this to be the Design of the Clause, it is nevertheless to be remember'd, that the same Article, which gives them this Authority, doth limit them absolutely to God's Word written, against which, and besides which, they may not enforce any Thing to be believ'd for Necessity of Salvation. And, who is to judge, whether what is decreed by them, be founded upon Scripture, or not? For if the Article hath any Sense in it, Somebody must be suppos'd to judge in the Case: Shall they then be the sole Judges Themselves? That seems hardly reasonable; because the same Majority of Votes, which, at first, pass'd, we may well suppose, will also affirm, the Decree. Besides, if as the next Article asserts, "General Councils (forasmuch as

2

" they

" they be an Assembly of Man, whereof all
 " be not govern'd with the Spirit and Word
 " of God) may err, and sometimes have
 " err'd, even in Things pertaining unto God ;"
 may not *the same* likewise be true of any Na-
 tional Council, Synod, Church or Convoca-
 tion ? Is it not therefore with the *highest*
 Reason and Justice, that in a Matter of so
 great Importance, the *Thinking Part* of the
 Clergy claim a Right to examine, and judge,
every Man for himself, as every Man must
 answer for himself ? And seeing that after all
 that the Church can do, or pretend to, the
Holy Scriptures are here declar'd to be, and
 in the Nature of the Thing, *must be*, the
Rule of Faith and Doctrine ; what Occasion,
 what Reason, can there possibly be for any
 other Test of Orthodoxy to the Clergy, than
 that single, plain, Proposition, before-men-
 tioned, viz. That the Holy Scriptures are
 the Word of God, and contain every Thing ne-
 cessary to Salvation ? Especially, if there
 were added a solemn Declaration, to be made
 on all proper Occasions, by every Clergy-
 man, to this Effect, viz. that he will teach,
 or maintain nothing as necessary to Salvation,
 but

but what he is persuaded may be prov'd and concluded from these Holy Scriptures.

What my very *Orthodox*, or my very *Cautious Brethren* may think of this Matter, is best known to themselves: for my own Part, I freely declare, that I cannot perceive any *one Inconvenience*, or *ill Consequence*, but, on the contrary, think, I see *many good Ones*, which *this Method* would be most likely to produce. Would it, for Instance, endanger any *one necessary Truth* of the Gospel? Would it render any *one Scripture Doctrine* of our Church *less firm and secure*? Would it keep any *deserving Men* out of the Ministry, or let in *more* that are *undeserving*, than the *present Method*? Would it lessen either the *Credit*, or the *Revenue* of the Clergy, and so render them *less able* to do Good, than they *now* are? On the other hand, are *Truth* and *Unity*, the Points we aim at? What would more naturally contribute to these valuable Ends, than the Method, *here* proposed and recommended? I do not mean *such an Agreement* in the Truth, as would *absolutely*, and *at once*, put an End to all
Error

Error and all Disputes amongst us: That, in the Nature of Things, seems utterly unattainable; and therefore not to be hoped for. There must (saith St. Paul, 1 Cor. xi. 19.) be also Heresies, i. e. different Sects and Opinions, among you, that they which are approved, may be made manifest: Which seems to imply, not only that different Opinions, from the different Capacities and Educations of Men, are unavoidable, but also that there is a kind of Fitness, that it should be so, for the better Discovery and Manifestation of Truth. What therefore I mean, is plainly this ——— that, as the holy Scriptures are a Rule, which all reasonable Christians acquiesce in; if, instead of the Interpretations and Conclusions of uninspired and fallible Men, an Assent to these Scriptures in general was all, that was requir'd ——— it would, I am persuaded, be the most effectual Method to bring Men to all that Agreement in the Truth, which can reasonably be expected, and prevent much of that Diversity of Opinions (and of that Uncharitableness, too often from thence arising) which our present Standard and Subscription have
never

never been able to prevent, though *expressly* intended for that Purpose. For, I think, it is evident both from the *Reason of the Thing*, and our *own Experience*, that *Truth* (and consequently *Charity*) will always flourish in Proportion to the *Liberty* Men enjoy, of enquiring after it, and of publishing with *Safety*, their Sentiments to the World.

Seeing therefore, that *Truth* is but one, whilst *Error* is manifold and various; methinks, *my Lord*, there is need rather, that every *Restraint* should be remov'd, and that all the *Room and Encouragement*, that can be, should be given to that *Freedom of Enquiry*, which is necessary to detect the *Windings* and *false Colourings of the one*, and to set forth the *native Beauty and Simplicity of the other*. And, if in Consequence of this, some *idle and groundless Notions* should *sometimes* get Abroad, is not *that* the Case even now? Or if any Opinion, now currently taken for *Orthodox*, should appear to be otherwise; what Harm would ensue to the *Church*, or to *Religion*; or why should we be concerned for the

the Loss of an *Error*, when thereby we gain a *Truth*?

I would not trespass too much upon your *Grace's* Time and Patience; or I could point out several Things in our *Articles*, &c. which methinks, might be altered, without any Hurt or Injury, to the Church. However, a few *Instances* may not be amiss (I don't mean for your *Grace's* Information, but) as a Hint to some others, that the Church is not so unexceptionable, as they perhaps may think her to be. But, first, my Lord, I must beg leave to observe, what a Pity it is, that as the *Articles* are all enjoin'd to be subscrib'd, as agreeable to the Word of God, the *Compilers* have not given us *References* to those Passages of Scripture, from whence the several Doctrines in them are concluded and drawn. This, I think, is always done by all Writers, who desire not to be believed upon their own bare Word and Authority; and seems to have been more especially requisite and proper in this Case, where the Business was, to frame and set up a *Standard* of Faith and Doctrine agreeable

able to Scripture, but not the very Scriptures themselves. And therefore to remedy this Defect (if these Articles must still be continued) I would humbly propose, that the next Time the Convocation shall meet and sit to do Business, they might make it their first Work, to cause a new Edition of them to be prepared, printed, and published, with such proper, plain, and indubitable References annexed, as for the future may put it out of all Manner of Dispute, that our Faith standeth not in the Wisdom, or Systems, of Men, but (as it ought) in the Power, and Word of God. Mr. Welchman (that strenuous Assertor and Defender of the Articles) was so very sensible, that something of this Nature was wanting, that, in his Edition of them, printed at Oxford for the Use of the Youth of that University, he hath endeavoured to supply it. But, whether his single Judgment will be thought sufficient, I cannot say. However, as the Compilers have omitted it, and the Convocation hath hitherto done nothing towards it, we are certainly obliged to him for the References, he hath given us; and which, we may suppose

pose too (as they have never, that I know of, been publickly, or by Authority, call'd in Question) are allow'd to be as *opposite* and *proper*, as any that can be found.

This being premis'd, I now proceed to the Instances, I propos'd.

The IVth Article (entituled, of the *Resurrection of Christ*) asserts, — that “Christ
“ did truly rise again from Death, and took
“ again his Body with Flesh, Bones, and all
“ Things appertaining to the Perfection of
“ Man's Nature, wherewith he ascended
“ into Heaven, and there sitteth, &c.” That
Christ ascended into Heaven; must be allowed
by every one, that believeth the Scriptures;
but, that he ascended into the *Highest Heaven*,
or *Presence of God*, and there sitteth with his
Body, i. e. *Flesh and Bones, &c.* may very
reasonably be questioned; because we find
St. Paul very positively declaring, 1 Cor. xv.
50, that *Flesh and Blood cannot inherit the
Kingdom of God* — that therefore, They
who shall be alive at the last Trump, will
all be changed in a Moment — And,
Phil. iii. 21. that our Lord Jesus Christ

will change our vile Body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious Body —

Which seems to imply, that it was not *His Body, with Flesh, Bones, &c.* wherewith he ascended *into Heaven*, or the Presence of God, and in which he *now sitteth*, as the Article asserts; but a *spiritual, or glorified Body*, as the Apostle speaks; wherewith, he assures all good Christians, *they also shall be cloathed*, instead of *this vile earthly Tabernacle*. St. Luke indeed, in two Places, viz. of his Gospel, Chap. xxiv. 5, and Acts i. 11, says, that the Apostles saw him taken up (in the *same Body*, in which he had just been conversing with them) *εἰς τὸν οὐρανόν*; but, he does not mean *into Heaven*, or that State of Glory, where Christ is said to *sit at God's Right Hand*, but only *into the Air* (as τὰ πτείνοντα τῷ οὐρανῷ are the *Fowls of the Air*, Matt. vi. 26. and this vast Expanse, or Firmament, above us, is called Gen. ii. 1, *ὁ οὐρανός*) *where a Cloud received Him out of their Sight* *. The Conclusion

* I make no manner of Doubt, but this Article was design'd against the *Popish Doctrine of the Real and Corporal Presence of Christ in the Eucharist*; and that

our

to be drawn from hence, I leave to *your Grace*, and to every honest Reader: and so proceed to

The IXth Article, entituled, *Of Original, or Birth Sin*; which is there described to be "The Fault and Corruption of the Nature of every Man, that naturally is engendered of the Offspring of *Adam*, whereby Man is very far gone from Original Righteousness, and is of his own Nature inclin'd to evil, &c.

It would take up too much time to consider the several Particulars in this Article, that

our Reformers, desiring to establish the contrary from Scripture, but taking what is there said of *His ascending visibly into Heaven, and sitting at God's right Hand, &c.* in the gross and literal Sense, and without considering and comparing Things together, did fall into this egregious Blunder; just as their Zeal against another Popish Doctrine, viz. *The Merit of good Works*, led them to attribute *Man's Justification* to Faith only, and to speak of *good Works*, not as absolutely necessary, but only as pleasing and acceptable to Christ; without setting forth either what they meant by *good Works*, by *Justification*, and by *Faith only*, or what is meant by those Phrases in Scripture.

that deserve Animadversion ; I will therefore content myself, only with observing,

1st, That this *Original*, or *Birth Sin*, as here describ'd, cannot possibly be *any Sin at all* to us, being *the Fault and Corruption of our Nature*, not by any Act of *our own*, nor with *our Consent*, but entirely by the Act of *another* ; who yet never had any Right, either *inherent in himself*, or by our *Appointment*, to represent, or act for, us : Not, I say, any Right *in himself* ; because, whatever Right a Father may be thought to have, in other Respects, to act for his Children, certainly he can have *no Right* to entail Guilt upon them (nor indeed a *Power*, because *Guilt* is a Thing entirely *personal*) And, that he cou'd have no *Appointment* from us, is evident ; because the *Thing* was done before we were born. And if the *Order* and *Appointment* shall be said to have been from God ; what will be the Consequence ? So that whatever might be the Guilt of *Adam's* Transgression with regard to *himself*, it cou'd not possibly reach to *us*, who were noways concern'd in the Fact, nor consenting to it.

But,

But, 2dly. I observe, that *the Thing itself* viz. this *Corruption of Nature*, here spoken of, and said to be deriv'd from *Adam*, is, at best, but doubtful, and seems to stand upon a very slender foundation. For what does it rest upon, more than a *Supposition*? Or, how does it appear, that *Adam's Nature*, i. e. his natural Faculties and Powers, his *Understanding*, his *Will*, or his *Inclination to Goodness*, were, by his *Fall*, so corrupted, and chang'd for the *worse*, as this Article *implies* and *supposeth*, but does not *prove*, that they were? From the time of this Transaction, and his Expulsion out of Paradise (which are thought to have happen'd soon after his Creation) we have no Account of *Adam's* Life and Behaviour, tho' he is said to have liv'd upwards of 900 Years. We are told indeed, that the World soon began to be wicked, and in process of time became so bad, as to deserve (except *Noah* and his Family) to be cut off and destroy'd by a Deluge of Waters: And, if there was *no other Way* to account for this *Wickedness*, it might well be imputed to some *Birth Sin*, or *Corruption of Nature*, convey'd from our
First

First Parents to their Offspring. But if *Man* was originally form'd so, as to be, in *himself*, capable of it, i. e. with a Power of discerning *Good* and *Evil*, and of choosing either; and also, with Faculties of a *lower Kind*, that were able to contradict, and maintain a *Conflict* with, his *upper Faculties*, and to incline him to choose the *latter*; if *Man*, I say, was originally form'd thus, what need is there of any Thing else, to account for the Degeneracy and Wickedness of his Posterity?

And, that *this* was really the case, I think, must be evident to any *impartial* and *unprejudic'd* Person, even from the *Scripture-account itself*. For, we find, that when the *Woman* saw, that the *Tree* was good for Food, and pleasant to the Eyes, and to be desir'd to make one wise, i. e. when (as *St. James* saith) she was drawn away of her own Lust, and enticed; then it was, she did eat, and gave also to her Husband, and he did eat; and so both transgress'd the Law of their Maker even in their *First* and *most perfect* State, and before any supposed Corruption had taken Place

Place. And to this agrees the Testimony of Solomon, who says, that *God made Man upright, but they have sought out many inventions.* That therefore our *first Parents*, tho' they, doubtless, came out of their Maker's Hands *pure and spotless*, yet were, in themselves, *peccable*, or liable to Sin; being so fram'd and constituted, suitably to the wise and good Purposes of God, as to be capable of choosing either *Good or Evil*; and that, when put to the Tryal, they suffer'd their *Appetites* to prevail, and so did *actually* choose *Evil*, is, I think, clear and evident from the *Scriptures themselves*. And, if by thus perverting their Nature and Liberty, Sin enter'd into the World *at first*, what Occasion is there to look for any other Cause of it's continuing, or even increasing in it, *afterwards*? So that, as far as I can see, or understand, of this Matter (who am always contented with *plain Reason, Common Sense, and Scripture*) I cannot help thinking that what our *Compilers*, either thro' *Ignorance*, or the *Authority* of some great Name, have call'd *Original, or Birth Sin*, and have represented, as so *powerful*, and attended with

H such

such dreadful Effects, is in Reality no other, than the very *Frame and Constitution of human Nature itself*; which indeed was not made *infallible and impeccable*; but yet, was *wisely* contriv'd by it's Author in such a Manner, as wou'd best suit his End and Design; which plainly was, by making us *Moral Agents*, and putting us in a *State of Tryal* here, to fit us for a *State of Happiness, or Misery*, hereafter.

It may perhaps be expected, that some Notice shou'd be taken of those Passages in Scripture, which are usually produc'd in Proof of the Doctrine of this Article; but *that* having been already done by a *judicious and masterly Hand* *, I may well be excus'd from attempting it here; and will therefore proceed to

The xiiiith Article, entitul'd *Of Works before Justification*, which asserts, " That Works, done before the Grace of Christ, and Inspiration of his Spirit, are not plea-

* Mr. John Taylor of Norwich, in a Book, entitled, *The Scripture Doctrine of Original Sin.*

"sant to God; forasmuch as they spring not
 "of Faith in Jesus Christ; neither do they
 "make Men meet to receive Grace, or (as
 "the School Authors say) deserve Grace of
 "Congruity: yea rather, for that they are
 "not done, as God hath will'd and com-
 "manded them to be done, we doubt not,
 "but that they have the Nature of Sin."

In this Article there are three Propositions,
viz. 1. That "Works (*i. e.* Works good in
 "themselves; for, of *such* the Article must
 "be understood to speak) done before the
 "Grace of Christ, and Inspiration of his
 "Spirit, are not pleasant (Lat. *Grata*,
pleasing, or *acceptable*) to God: "Neither,
 "2. do they make Men meet to receive Grace,
 "or (as the School Authors say) deserve
 "Grace of Congruity: Yea rather, 3. for
 "that they are not done, as God hath will'd
 "and commanded them to be done, we
 "doubt not but they have the Nature of
 "Sin."

As to the first, it will, I believe, be rea-
 dily granted, that *Works, good in their own*

Nature, may be so circumstanc'd, as not to be acceptable to God, either in a *Heathen*, or even in a *Christian*, 1 *Cor.* xiii. 3. But to us, who so often read, that *God is not the God of the Jews only*, i. e. of those only, to whom he hath given a *Revelation*, but also of the *Gentiles*, tho' he hath not vouchsafed them any such Privilege; and that he is a *Rewarder of them that diligently seek him*; to us, I say, who read these Things so frequently, it cannot but appear a very extraordinary Assertion, that the *best Endeavours of an honest, sober Heathen* are not acceptable to God, because they sprung not of Faith in Christ, whom he *never knew*, nor *heard of*; nor possibly cou'd, *Rom.* x. 14. *Virtue*, doubtless, was *always* acceptable to God, and the *original Ground* of his Approbation, *Gen.* iv. 7. As therefore, on the one Hand, to say, there was *no Virtue among the Heathens*, is to contradict the *whole Current* of ancient History; so, on the other, to say, that it was not acceptable to God, because it sprung not from Faith in Christ, is to say, there was *something necessary* to their pleasing God, which yet was *absolutely out of their Power*.

Upon

Upon what Passages of Scripture this Article is grounded, the *Compilers* have not been so kind as to tell us: But Mr. *Welchman*, to whose Assistance I am forc'd to have recourse, refers us, in Proof of this *First Proposition*, to Rom. iii. 9, 10, 19, 20, 23. viii. 7, 8. Which Passages, it must be granted, do fully prove, that the Bulk of Mankind, both *Jews* and *Gentiles*, had greatly corrupted themselves; and whilst they continued in that State, were, *Both*, obnoxious to the divine Displeasure; and being unable to extricate themselves out of this dangerous Condition, were therefore *Both* in need, and *Both* equally concern'd to accept, of that Method of Pardon and Justification, which was offer'd them by the Gospel of Christ. This is the *main Drift* and *Tenour* of the Apostle's Reasoning in this Epistle; as will be evident to any one, that will but read it, and especially the *three first Chapters* of it, with Care and Attention. But, from this general Corruption of Men before the Coming of Christ, it will not follow, that there was

no *Virtue at all* in the World, or, that if there *was*, yet it was not *pleasing to God*, because it proceeded not from *Faith in Christ*: And indeed, I think, there is, in this very Epistle, very much to the contrary. For, when the Apostle says, Chap. ii. 14. — *When the Gentiles, which have not the Law, do by Nature the Things contained in the Law* — does he not manifestly allow, that notwithstanding the great Degeneracy, he had before describ'd, yet there were, or had been, *some virtuous Men among the Gentiles*? And, when he says, ver. 6th and 10th, of the same Chapter, that *God will render to every Man according to his Deeds — Glory, Honour, and Peace to every Man, that worketh Good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile* — is it not evidently implied, that *Virtue, or good Works, are pleasing to God*, though they do not spring of Faith in Jesus Christ? As therefore the Question here is properly (not, whether there were any good Works among the Heathen, but) whether *supposing* there were, they were pleasing, or acceptable to God, though they sprung not of

of Faith in Christ; so, I think, *Common Sense*, and the *Apostle*, both, say, they *were*; whilst *the Article* positively affirms, they *were not*.

When I enter'd upon this Article, I thought to have gone through it all at once: but, finding it would draw me too much into Length, and having, I fear, sufficiently tir'd *your Grace* already, I will postpone the Examination of the two Propositions remaining, till a further Opportunity; when I possibly may, if Health and Leisure permit, offer to *your Grace* my Thoughts upon some other of the Articles, not *less worthy notice*, than These.

In the mean time, I sincerely wish for *your Grace's* Health and long Enjoyment of that *high Station*, wherein you are plac'd; And I solemnly profess to *your Grace*, and to the *whole World*, that, in thus freely declaring my Sentiments with Regard to the Necessity of a Review, and *further Reformation of our Articles, Liturgy, &c.* I have no other Design, but to contribute my *best*,

nest, though poor, *Endeavours*, to promote what, I think, would be for the *Honour of Christianity* in general, and of *our Protestant Church* in particular; and to excite such of my Brethren, as are under the same Conviction (who, I believe, are not a Few) to do the same, as by the *Fundamental Principles and Tenets of our Church*, I have proved, they ought, and are required to do. Among *consistent Protestants*, there can be no doubt, but that a *Liturgy*, and *Confession of Faith*, which are intended for the *Use and Benefit of all Ranks and Degrees of People*, should be so framed, if possible, both for *Matter and Expression*, as to have Nothing in them, but what is *simple, plain, and necessary*, to all those, who are to join in them. Whatever is *more* than this, tends only to perplex *Men's Minds*, to confound *Religion*, and to beget *Uncharitableness*, than which, nothing can be more repugnant to the *True Gospel of Christ*. And I cannot help thinking with the late *Learned and judicious Dr. Wake**, that ——— " It hath ne-

* Serm. before K. William and Q. Mary at Hampton-Court, May 21, 1689.

" ever gone well with the Church of Christ,
 " since Men have been so narrow-spirited,
 " as to mix the Controversies of Faith with
 " their publick Forms of Worship; and
 " have made their Liturgies, instead of being
 " Offices of Devotion to God, to become
 " Tests and Censures of the Opinions of
 " their Brethren." For, indeed, to what
 else can we so naturally ascribe those *Dis-*
putes and Animosities, which so long have
 divided, and do still divide the Members
 of Christ's Church? To what but *this* can
 we impute the great *Neglect*, I had almost
 said, *Contempt*, of the Publick Service and
 sacred Ordinances of Religion, which is so
 visible, and so much complain'd of amongst
 ourselves? And I know not, whether a great
 deal of that *Deistical Turn*, which, of late
 Years especially, hath appeared in this Na-
 tion, may not, properly enough, be attri-
 buted to the same Cause; whilst *some*, either
 not at all, or not *sufficiently*, distinguishing
 between the *Gospel*, and *some Doctrines* of
 the Church, on account of the *One*, have
 been tempted to question the *Other*, and
 in the End perhaps (unreasonably enough)
 to reject *Both*: Unreasonably, I say, because,
 certainly they ought *first* to be very sure,

that there is an inseparable Connection and Agreement between them: And, if they cannot prove *That*, why should the Fate of the One be made to determine the Fate of the Other?

And, to shew, that this is not an empty Conjecture, I appeal to a certain *Performance*, entituled, *Deism fairly stated, and fully vindicated*; which the Author seems to acknowledge to contain the *Reasons* of his *Departure* from the *Christian Faith*. Now these *Reasons* are not all drawn (as they certainly should have been) from the *Revelation itself*; but, several of them, only from some establish'd *Points of Orthodoxy*, such as, *The Trinity*, *The Hypostatical Union* of two *Natures* in *Christ*, and the *Doctrine of Christ's Satisfaction*: which, however absurd, unintelligible, and unworthy of *God and Man*, the Author might think them, he ought, surely, to have prov'd to be real *Doctrines* of the *Gospel*, before he had offer'd them as *Reasons* for his deserting it. The finding them held and maintained in any *Christian Church*, or by any *Writers* in it, is not sufficient; for *Churches*, and *Doctors* may be mistaken: And therefore, methinks, those
Gentle-

Gentlemen, who undertake to write 'against the *Deists*, would do well to consider, whether the true Way of answering *Them*, and defending *Christianity*, would not be, to require and insist upon it, that they produce their Allegations against the Gospel, only from the Gospel itself. By this Method, they would not only throw the *Lab'ring Oar* upon their Adversaries; but, by depriving them of their chief Strength, would also (if I mistake not) greatly contribute to lessen their Number, and to make the Gospel appear, what, in itself, all reasonable Men think it, *The Wisdom and Power of God unto Salvation, and worthy of all Men to be received.*

And here I cannot forbear troubling your Grace with a Paragraph, or Two, from a Book, publish'd some few Years ago by a Set of very judicious Gentlemen, under the Title of *Free and Candid Disquisitions, &c.* a Work, I think, very highly to be esteem'd, though I do not agree with it in every particular. "The Cause (say They, pag. 8, 9.) of the Christian Religion, as such, is, "undoubtedly superior to every other Consideration: And in order to support That of the Church of England, the Former must

" by all means be made the principal Ob-
 " ject of our Regard, as being the main and
 " only Basis, on which this Fabrick stands.
 " When Christianity falls, the Church of
 " England, of Course, falls with it: And it
 " is in vain, we hope to support our Church
 " upon the Ruins of Christianity; or ever
 " expect to see it flourish, when we admit
 " or retain any thing in its Constitution,
 " which is inconsistent with the great De-
 " sign, and exalted Genius of that Religion,
 " or which may be any Ways obstructive of
 " its Course and destin'd Progress."

" It is in this large and more extensive
 " View, that we contemplate Things. We
 " consider, in the first Place, the grand De-
 " sign of the Christian Religion; and in the
 " next, the Constitution of the Church of
 " England, as intended to be subservient
 " to that Design. When therefore we de-
 " sire some Amendments in the Constitu-
 " tion of this Church, we desire them only
 " in order to the better Support and Advance-
 " ment of Christianity: Which as Things
 " now stand, and are no better regulated a-
 " mong us, we, for our Parts, apprehend
 " to be in some Danger of losing Ground,
 and

“ and by Degrees of giving Way to some
 “ thing very pernicious, and at last de-
 “ structive both to *Church and State*.” An
 Apprehension, I fear, but too well-ground-
 ed: May we see, and pursue, *in Time*, the
 Things that belong to our Peace and Safety!

Thus have I presum'd to lay before *your*
Grace, and the *World*, with some *Freedom*,
 I own; but yet, I hope, with *Decency*, the
real Sentiments of my Heart: And tho' I
 cannot but wish they did more generally pre-
 vail, yet I condemn no Man for *honestly* dis-
 senter from me; nor can any Man condemn
 me, without condemning, at the same Time,
 the *fundamental Principles and Tenets* of the
 Church. *Those* are the Principles I go upon;
 and if *these* are *right*, the *Conclusion* is *plain*.
 Nor can it reasonably be doubted, but his
 Majesty, whose *Wisdom, Vigilance, and ten-*
der Concern for the Happiness of all his Sub-
 jects, have *always* been so *evident and conspi-*
cuous, will graciously condescend to take into
 his *royal Consideration* the *hard Case* of the
Thinking Part of his Clergy (whenever it is
fully and fairly represented to him) and to
 concur in promoting and administering that
Ease and Relief to their *Consciences*, and, at
 the

the same Time, that *Justice* to the Gospel of *Christ*, which they so ardently long for, and pant after.

With this *pleasing Hope* then, I will take my Leave of your *Grace*, for the *present* at least; earnestly beseeching the *great Governor* of all Things, in the wise Dispositions of his Providence, to prosper every Attempt for his Honour and Glory — and intreating all those, who, by their superior Understanding and Station, are best able to contribute to this glorious Work, that they will exert that Ability with a becoming Zeal — those of them especially, who are *more immediately* concern'd, that they will consult the Honour of their *great Master*, and of that Church (in which they are appointed the Overseers) that it may become that *glorious Church* mentioned by St. Paul, *Ephes. v. 27*; and tho' they may have no Occasion to *subscribe*, or *declare Assent*, any more *themselves*, yet, that they will consider the *Difficulties* and *Discouragements*, which many of their *Inferiars* labour under, and amongst the rest (which I am not ashamed to own)

4 OC 58
Your Grace's, &c.

F I N I S.